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SIXERS' HOLIDAY CRAVES CLUTCH {page 19}

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PHILADELPHIA
Tuesday, November 27, 2012

Can SEPTA save the city's most dangerous El stop?

Transit agency's new police chief vows putting end to violence and drug dealing at Kensington and Somerset El station a top priority ◐ Residents, businesses say it's about time ◐ Round-the-clock police presence promised {page 02}

▶ A SEPTA police officer yesterday ran up the stairs at the notorious elevated train stop above Kensington Avenue.

RIKARD LARMA/METRO

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◐ Military occupation has ended and tourism will soon be in full swing {page 17}

Chris Brown: Another timeout

{page 10}

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SEPTA top cop vows to take back Somerset

Most violent and drug-riddled El stop in Kensington gets new intensive enforcement ● New transit police chief wants to break up 'land of zombies'

One of the worst-kept secrets in Philadelphia for years has been the open-air drug trafficking at Kensington Avenue and Somerset Street underneath the Market-Frankford elevated line.

On any given day, cars drive slowly around the intersection looking for drug dealers, guys walk up and down the street shouting "work," advertising their illegal activity, and money changes hands in plain sight.

"A lot of things been ignored," said a woman who only identified herself as Naomi for fear of retaliation. She said she has picked up trash in the neighborhood for 12 years and used to stay in a house about 100 feet away. "It's a shame that little kids have to be exposed to the needles, the trash and the dirt."

But yesterday, something else appeared at the busy intersection: uniformed SEPTA police. The transit agency, in partnership with Philadelphia Police officers from the 24th District, began an enforcement effort to make the area a safe corridor for riders and residents.

SEPTA said it will maintain a police presence there around-the-clock and step up cleaning efforts.

"The number one expectation is that the station will remain clean," said SEPTA Police Chief Thomas Nestel III, a former Philadelphia police officer. "Number two is that people can make it safely to our station and from our station without being afraid. We want to attack the fear people have in going to the Somerset station."

Nestel said officers will look to crack down on drug trafficking, prostitution, loitering and the sale of needles, but won't turn a blind eye to other crimes. At the same time, he said those who want help will be directed to social service providers.

"Everything is on the table at this location, especially in the beginning stages. We want to set the tone, and we want to set it pretty strongly," he said, adding that no end-date has been set for the effort.

SOLOMON D. LEACH
sleach@metro.us

RIKARD LARMA/METRO

▶ A police officer will always be present at Kensington and Somerset, Nestel said.

Business owner: Where have cops been all along?

While business owners welcome more enforcement, some blame police for not addressing the drug corner sooner.

"I used to call the cops, and now I don't even call them because they don't come and I see that nothing was being done," said one business owner, who declined to give her name. The woman, who does not speak English, said she has been in business since 2008 but has seen a steady decline.

"[Customers] don't want to come here because they don't want to get stuck up. When they drive up, people walk up to their cars thinking they want to buy drugs" she said, through an interpreter. "When the police are not around, [drug dealers] are all out in front." METRO/SDL

Constant presence promised at station

One of the problems with such enforcement efforts is that criminals simply relocate to another neighborhood, but Nestel said SEPTA plans to address that.

"Displacement is always a concern, which is why we're really focused on making sure we have options for people that really want help. We want to try to get folks hooked up with social services and get them out of that neighborhood and get them off of that corner," he said. "If it displaces them, then we'll work with the 24th District on addressing that problem."

He also vowed that when an officer leaves to process an arrest, another officer will replace them to maintain a constant presence. "We're in this for the long haul." METRO/SDL

"The number of people that hang out at our entrances and exits at the El is bizarre, and the best way to describe them is it's the land of the zombies."
SEPTA POLICE CHIEF THOMAS NESTEL III

In the news

13

Fatal crashes over the Thanksgiving holiday weekend responded to by Pennsylvania State Police, up from 10 last year. Crash-related injuries were also up, with 349 compared to 326 in 2011.
METRO

In the news

Second term
New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie, a Republican star who has enjoyed record-high popularity for his hands-on approach to Hurricane Sandy, yesterday filed papers announcing his intention to seek a second term next November. Despite his popularity on the national stage, Christie — known for his blunt, sometimes over-the-top style — has sometimes struggled to win over his constituents in liberal New Jersey, where Democrats control both houses of the legislature. REUTERS

In the news

▶ A fire at a city home left one resident dead.

House fire kills man, injures another

PORT RICHMOND. One man was killed and another critically injured during a house fire on Joyce Street yesterday.

Authorities identified George Sarros, 59, as the man killed in the fire. A 76-year-old man was taken to Temple University Hospital with extensive burns.

The cause of the fire is under investigation, but fire officials said the home had faulty wiring and multiple space heaters.
METRO

Two sentenced in torture scheme

NORTH PHILADELPHIA. Two people were sentenced yesterday for luring a woman to a North Philadelphia home and torturing her.

Tamara Rhoades was sentenced to 20 to 40 years in prison, while friend Steven Mills was sentenced to 16 to 32 years.

Both pleaded guilty to human trafficking charges earlier this year.

Prosecutors said the two, and Rhoades' husband, Michael, held the woman captive and burned her at an apartment on North 23rd Street. METRO

'Heinous' puppy killer sought in NE Pa. town

LEHIGH COUNTY. Animal welfare investigators yesterday sought clues in the skinning of 11 puppies whose bodies were found stuffed in a bag left in a ditch in eastern Pennsylvania.

The gruesome discovery was made on Friday in Lower Macungie, about 20 miles from Lynn Township, where days earlier another animal carcass was found skinned and cooked with its feet cut-off, said Bruce Fritch, board president of the Lehigh County Humane Society, which is investigating the slayings.

"It's just heinous," Fritch said. A black plastic sack containing the skinless puppy bodies was found by a woman walking her dog near a park in Lower Macungie.
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PA's debt problem linked to pensions

State owes $41 billion to its two huge public pension programs ◗ Governor proposing reform measures in '13

▶ Corbett plans to propose pension reform next year.

Quoted

"Absent meaningful structural pension reform, the state's general-fund budget is on a very predictable path that will force a choice between either fully funding pension obligations or making cuts to the core functions of government." ZOGBY

Pennsylvania's two public pensions face a combined shortfall of $41 billion, and their costs will consume 62 percent of fiscal 2014 revenue growth, according to a report from the state budget office.

The State Employees' Retirement System has 65 percent of assets needed to cover projected liabilities and the Pennsylvania Public School Employees' Retirement System is 69 percent funded, the report said. The plans cover 817,000 people. In July, Moody's Investors Service cut the state's general obligation debt rating to Aa2, its third-highest, citing rising pension obligations that will weigh on its economic recovery. Funding for state retirement plans across the U.S. fell in fiscal 2011 for a fourth straight year, to a median coverage ratio of 72 percent, data compiled by Bloomberg show.

"Absent meaningful structural pension reform, the state's general-fund budget is on a very predictable path that will force a choice between either fully funding pension obligations or making cuts to the core functions of government," Charles Zogby, Pennsylvania's budget secretary, said.

State revenue is projected to rise by about $818.7 million in fiscal 2014, according to the report. Pension cost increases, estimated at $511.2 million, will account for almost two-thirds of the additional revenue, the report shows.

Gov. Tom Corbett intends to propose a pension overhaul in his 2014 spending plan, for the year that begins in July, according to the report. Retirees and current employees with accrued benefits won't be affected, it said. Steps taken by other states, such as increasing worker contributions, raising the retirement age and adjusting payment formulas such as credit for years of service, provide potential models for Pennsylvania. BLOOMBERG

Weather. Slick roads

▶Charles Slider, master stylist and and colorist at Toppers Spa and Salon on Rittenhouse Square, enjoyed the autumn weather on a motorbike ride with his dog, Bazel.

RIKARD LARMA/METRO

Snow flurries riding into region

Temperatures topped out at 50 degrees briefly yesterday ahead of a short-lived storm set to arrive today and drop some snow on the city and suburbs, according to the National Weather Service. Snow flurries are likely to drop on the region occasionally during the next 24 hours. METRO

Philly home equity rates are among the best

Home equity lines of credit that fueled a spending spree during the U.S. property boom are back.

After six years of declines, lending for so-called Helocs will rise 30 percent to $79.6 billion in 2012, the highest level since the start of the financial crisis in 2008, according to the economics research unit of Moody's Corp.

Some of the lowest rates are available in Philadelphia. Wells Fargo, the largest U.S. lender, is offering a prime plus 2 Heloc with a $10,000 minimum in Philadelphia, according to Bankrate.com, an interest rate aggregator. Typically, the margins banks add to the prime rate might start at around 2 percentage points, what banks would call prime plus 2. BLOOMBERG

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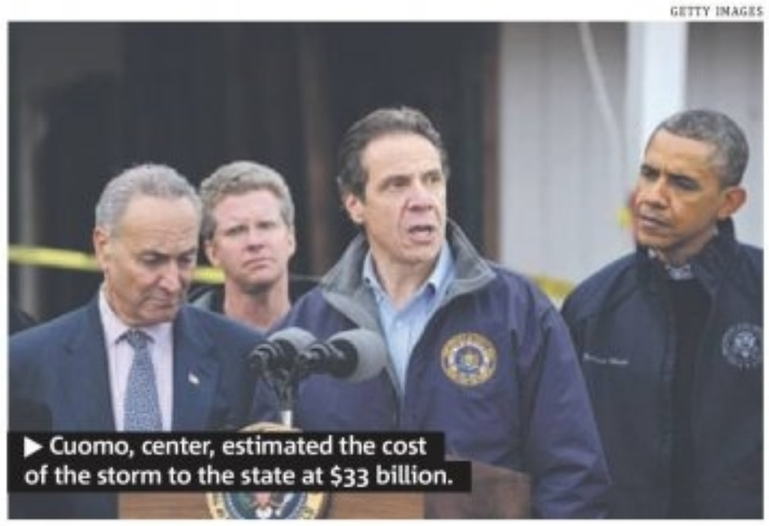

▶ Cuomo, center, estimated the cost of the storm to the state at $33 billion.

NY leaders plead for federal cash

New York City is seeking $9.8 billion in federal funds to repair infrastructure and recoup economic losses caused by Hurricane Sandy, Mayor Michael Bloomberg said.

Private insurance and Federal Emergency Management Agency reimbursements would pay only for $9.2 billion of the $19 billion in total public and private losses to the city from the superstorm, Bloomberg said in a letter to state Congress members. New York City's request includes $5.7 billion in lost economic activity.

"This funding will be needed to address the significant local expenses that have been and will be incurred, including costs that are ineligible under FEMA such as hazard mitigation, long-term housing solutions, and shoreline restoration and protection," the 70-year-old mayor said.

New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo said yesterday he is seeking a special federal appropriation of about $41 billion, including the cash for the city, $4.8 billion for the Metropolitan Transportation Authority and $9 billion to help prevent flooding.

$29B Damage estimate by New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie late last week in the Garden State while Connecticut Gov. Dannel Malloy projected at least $360 million in damages

Cuomo's request followed a meeting in Manhattan with the state's congressional delegation, the 54-year-old governor said. Hurricane Katrina, the 2005 storm that killed 1,833 people in New Orleans and on the Gulf Coast, will remain the costliest to strike the U.S., with Sandy probably second, Cuomo said.

"Katrina, which is the obvious comparison, in many ways was not as impactful as Sandy," Cuomo said. "Because of the density of New York, the number of people affected, and the number of properties affected, was much larger in Hurricane Sandy than Hurricane Katrina. That puts this entire conversation in focus."

BLOOMBERG

First Katrina, now Sandy

The federal government provided $146 billion to New Orleans and Gulf Coast communities after Katrina. That storm, along with Hurricane Rita less than a month later, destroyed or damaged 215,000 homes compared with 305,000 in New York from Sandy, Cuomo said.

In New York, 265,000 businesses were damaged or destroyed by Sandy, compared with 18,500 by Rita and Katrina, he said.

"I understand the fiscal pressures Washington is under," Cuomo said. "I know that the taxpayers of New York cannot shoulder this burden."

Bloomberg said New York City will struggle to recover unless Congress speeds funds.

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▶ All the gifts purchased will be sent directly to Metro's office. It's the third year of Metro Magic, where we ask our readers to go online to buy toys for underprivileged children. **METRO**

Supreme Court rekindles challenge to health-care law

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▶ Obama

The U.S. Supreme Court yesterday revived a challenge to President Barack Obama's healthcare reforms, allowing a Christian college to pursue litigation raising First Amendment objections to a law that the court mostly upheld in June.

Liberty University, based in Lynchburg, Va., had challenged both the individual mandate, which required all people to obtain insurance by 2014 or pay a penalty, and a separate mandate requiring large employers to provide coverage for workers.

In September 2011, a federal appeals court in Richmond, Va., said it lacked jurisdiction because challenging the mandates would have violated the federal Anti-Injunction Act's ban on lawsuits seeking to halt collection of a tax. **REUTERS**

Liberty not included

The Supreme Court did not include Liberty's appeal among the cases it reviewed earlier this year, which led to its upholding of the individual mandate by a 5-4 vote. A day after it ruled, the court formally declined to review Liberty's appeal.

But the university asked for a rehearing, saying that because the 4th Circuit was wrong to decide it lacked jurisdiction, its decision should be thrown out and a new lawsuit should proceed. The Supreme Court's order yesterday allows that to happen. **REUTERS**

▶ The Supreme Court

GETTY IMAGES

In the news

Study: Porn stars have higher self-esteem

The stereotypical view of female porn stars — that they are emotionally damaged and more likely to have been abused as children — is a myth, according to research.

A study by the Journal of Sex Research found porn stars are not more likely to have emotional problems.

In reality, the porn stars had higher self-esteem, self-confidence and a more flattering image of their bodies, according to the research, carried out at Pennsylvania's Shippensburg University, Texas Women's University and the Adult Industry Medical Healthcare Foundation.

The report, entitled "Pornography Actresses: An Assessment of the Damaged Goods Hypothesis," claims stereotypes have been embraced by anti-porn campaigners. **METRO**

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Tax hike looms, G-men find friend in Twitter

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Tax hike could cost $200B in spending

A White House report says that if Congress allows taxes to go up on middle-class families, consumers will spend $200 billion less in 2013.

The report by the White House's National Economic Council and Council of Economic Advisers was the latest salvo by President Barack Obama to encourage lawmakers to extend tax cuts for families making less than $250,000 a year and fix a tax aimed at making sure wealthy people pay a minimum amount.

The president is negotiating with Republicans in Congress over the "fiscal cliff" — a combination of tax increases and spending cuts that would go into effect next year if the two sides do not reach a deal to stop it.

While the White House and Republican leaders wrangle over raising taxes on the wealthy, Obama would like Congress to pass measures now to lock in lower tax rates for the middle class. **REUTERS**

FBI learns to tweet

The future is here — and it's watching

The FBI sees social media as a potential breeding ground for securities fraud, and has agents scouring Twitter and Facebook for tips, according to two top agents overseeing a long-running investigation into insider trading in the $2 trillion hedge fund industry.

April Brooks, a special agent in charge of the New York field office of the FBI, and David Chaves, a supervisory agent, said it is hard to predict the next wave of securities fraud, but they add that it will have a lot to do with advances in technology and social media. Brooks and Chaves oversee what the FBI calls "Operation Perfect Hedge," which has led to more than 60 convictions. **REUTERS**

No job security

Head of SEC stepping down

The head of the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, Mary Schapiro, will step down in December after a tumultuous four years in which she tried to rehabilitate the agency's battered reputation.

In a statement, Schapiro said she would leave the agency Dec. 14. SEC Commissioner Elisse Walter will serve as chairman-designate on a temporary basis. President Barack Obama plans to nominate a replacement soon. **REUTERS**

Honey, I'm home

Ironing revealed wife's past as a man

A Belgian husband is trying to evict his wife of 19 years after he found she used to be a man. The man, named only as Jan, discovered the truth when a cousin of his wife revealed the secret. Jan, 64, said he now understood why his wife "was no good at ironing."

The pair originally married when the wife came to his hometown of Antwerp to act as an au pair to his children from his first two marriages. Local judges have refused so far to let Jan evict his wife from the family home. **METRO**

19 The number of years Jan was married to his Indonesian wife, who was born male

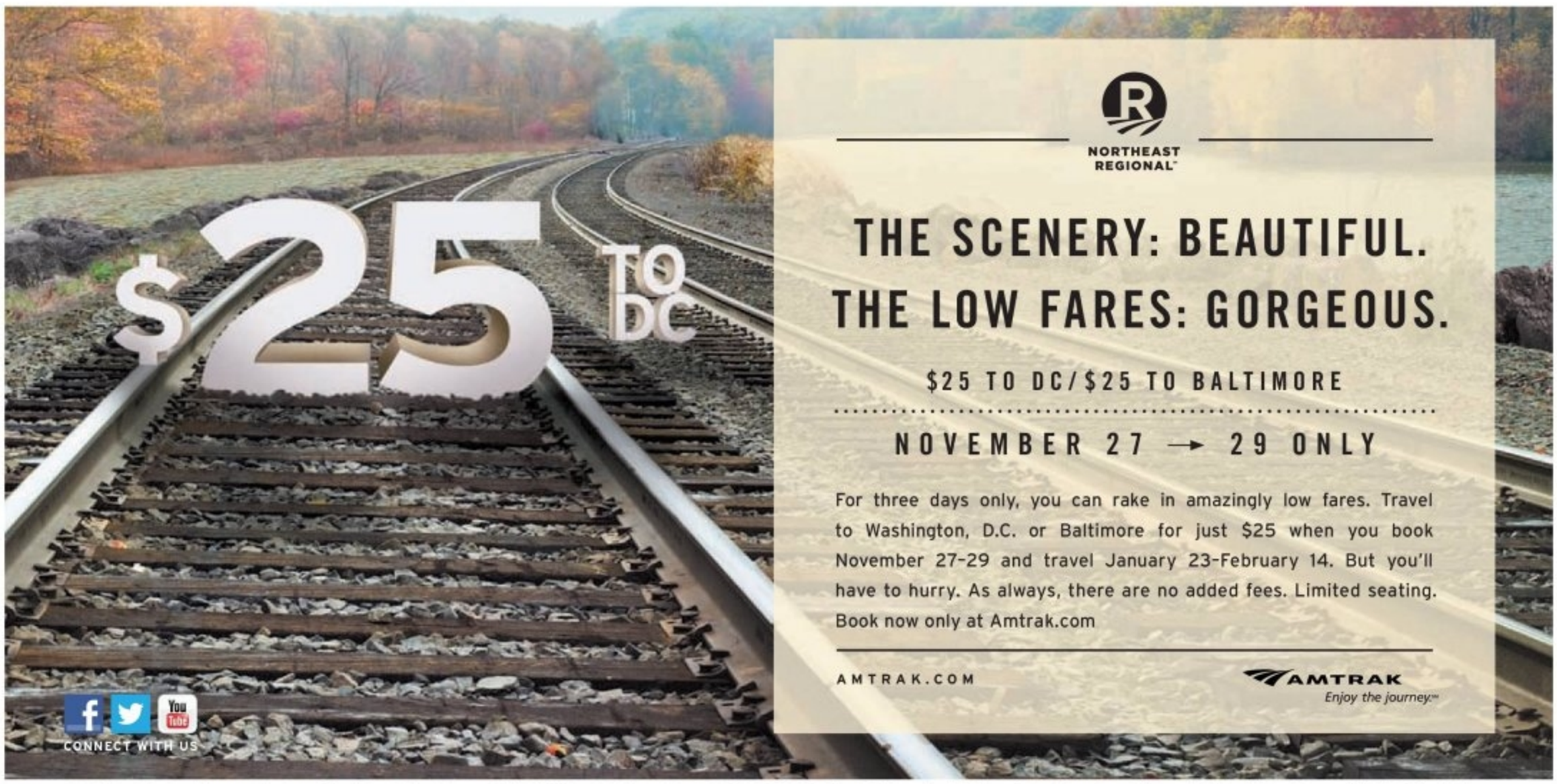
Mexican violence

Assassins finally kill female mayor, 36

The young woman mayor of a drugs-ridden Mexican town pleaded with assassins to spare her daughter's life.

Maria Santos Gorrostieta, 36, had twice survived assassination attempts before she was found murdered last week.

She was taken as she drove her young daughter to school, according to local reports. El Universal newspaper quoted witnesses as saying the mayor pleaded with her killers to spare her daughter's life, before the mayor was dragged into a car and driven away. Her body was found later. **METRO**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Study abroad

The business of higher education

British author and professor Gary Rolfe doesn't have to look far to find the encroaching corporate values he so vocally detests in education. His own university's mission statement is a prime example: "Swansea [University] will deliver an outstanding student experience, with teaching of the highest quality that produces graduates equipped for distinguished personal and professional achievement."

"The shocking thing about many of these mission statements for U.K. universities is the conspicuous lack of the word 'education' or the word 'learning,'" explains Rolfe. "[These words] have been replaced with 'student experience.'"

Rolfe's latest book, "University in Dissent: Scholarship in the Corporate University," is a philosophical tongue-lashing of the U.K.'s recent shift to a fee-for-degree system. "[In the U.S.] the focus appears still to be on education and, in some cases, a liberal education. This has all but disappeared in the U.K., apart from the very top schools," he says. "Part of the reason for the difference might be that American students have paid up-front for their education [for a long time], and the system has grown up around that idea — whereas fees were only introduced in the U.K. relatively recently. U.K. students are still adjusting to the idea of education as a purchase and, as a result, attitudes flipped very rapidly from education for its own sake to the idea of education as an investment."

Rolfe, for one, isn't hopeful that the current system can be changed. "If we look at the history of the modern university over the past 200 years, we can see a gradual but exponential shift from the university as being in the service of society and answerable to the state, to the current situation of self-funding, profit-making businesses," says Rolfe. "There is, I fear, no turning back."

BRUCE WALSH

The fee-for-degree trend will be difficult to reverse.

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The stats on college statistics programs

American undergraduates are showing an interest in statistics, which was once an unpopular field of study

GOODSHOOT

▶ Statisticians are more in-demand than ever.

In 2010, statistics professor Alan Agresti retired from the University of Florida after 38 years. In that time, he witnessed his field transform from a niche profession for the numerically inclined into one of the most marketable degrees in higher education.

His latest book — "Strength in Numbers," which he co-edited with Xiao-Li Meng of Harvard University — is an attempt to record the history of the oldest statistics programs across the U.S., from Berkeley to Princeton. "Back when I was a student, most people came to statistics through the back door. Often, you were a math major and you wound up taking a few statistics courses because you heard it had more connection to the real world. It wasn't until grad school that you really had the opportunity to study statistics," explains Agresti. "Now, most universities have quite a bit available at the undergraduate level."

During Agresti's career there has been an explosion in the demand for trained statisticians, particularly over the past 20 years, with advancements in computing. "There's been a shortage of statisticians for a long time. Partly, it's because statistics has never been regarded as an attractive degree by undergraduates in the U.S.," says Agresti. "Most graduate departments have more international students than American students. But the job market is fantastic. There are simply more jobs than graduates. The pharmaceutical industry alone has a huge need."

Quoted

"The job market is fantastic. There are simply more jobs than graduates."
AGRESTI

Now, for the first time, American students are declaring a statistics major before even stepping foot on a college campus. "It used to be that every college student in intro-stats didn't know what to expect," says Agresti. "Now, there are AP statistics courses offered at many high schools, so it's changed dramatically."

BRUCE WALSH
bruce.walsh@metro.us

In the news

A familiar face in Villanova's director's chair

Not many college theatrical productions are staged by award-winning directors. Even fewer are directed by the school's president. Villanova University may well be unique — the director of its current production, "The Drowsy Chaperone," is both.

Father Peter Donohue, president of Villanova, is also a Barrymore-winning director. "The department approached him as a way to bring him back home — he's the former chair of the department — as well as a way to draw attention to the theater program at Villanova," says Father David Cregan, assistant professor in Villanova's theater department.

Donohue's schedule is already quite full with his presidential duties, so "The Drowsy Chaperone" is being staged as the second production of the year. "This allowed Father Peter to do the production design and other preparation in the summer," Cregan explains.

The production team worked around his schedule as much as possible. When Donohue was unavailable, the assistant director, faculty member Valerie Joyce, stepped in and ran rehearsals.

"It was an insider treat to see him performing again," says Cregan.

JUDY WEIGHTMAN

Father Donohue

If you go

- "The Drowsy Chaperone" is a musical play within a play. A fan of musicals falls asleep listening to the soundtrack of a play called "The Drowsy Chaperone," which comes to life in his apartment. It runs at Villanova Theater through Dec. 2: Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8 p.m. and Sundays at 2 p.m.

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myentertainment

THE WORD

Metro's **Dorothy Robinson** shares her take on the world of gossip @dorothyatmetro dorothy.robinson@metro.us

Lohan wants more small-screen action

If you didn't catch the masterpiece that was Sunday night's "Liz & Dick" on Lifetime, you missed out on the pop culture phenomenon of the month. Critics had a mighty fine time lambasting what was to be **Lindsay Lohan**'s return to acting prominence. Instead, her performance seemed like it was best suited for community theater, if community theater were held in a prison.

But Lohan will not let a little thing like public ridicule get her down — RadarOnline.com is reporting that now that she's gotten a taste of TV, she wants her own sitcom.

"Lindsay has asked her manager and agent to look into getting her her own television sitcom," a source tells the website. "Lindsay feels that the small screen would be a great way for her to revitalize her acting career and that a comedy would be the best bet. Lindsay feels most comfortable doing comedy, and it was **Charlie Sheen** that told her she should do it."

Sadly, the numbers aren't backing up her small screen dreams. Lifetime said "Liz & Dick" averaged 3.5 million viewers, making it the fourth most-watched original movie premiere of the year — tragically, Lohan couldn't beat "Steel Magnolias," "Drew Peterson: Untouchable" and "Abducted: The Carlina White Story," which is about the woman who solved her own kidnapping 23 years after being abducted by a fake nurse from a New York City hospital.

Don't get any ideas, Lohan. No matter what the boon it might be to your ratings, stick to stealing necklaces, not babies.

Lohan at the premiere of "Liz & Dick"

The feed ...

▶ Checking in with some of Hollywood's biggest names to see what they've been up to — in their own words, in 140 characters or fewer.

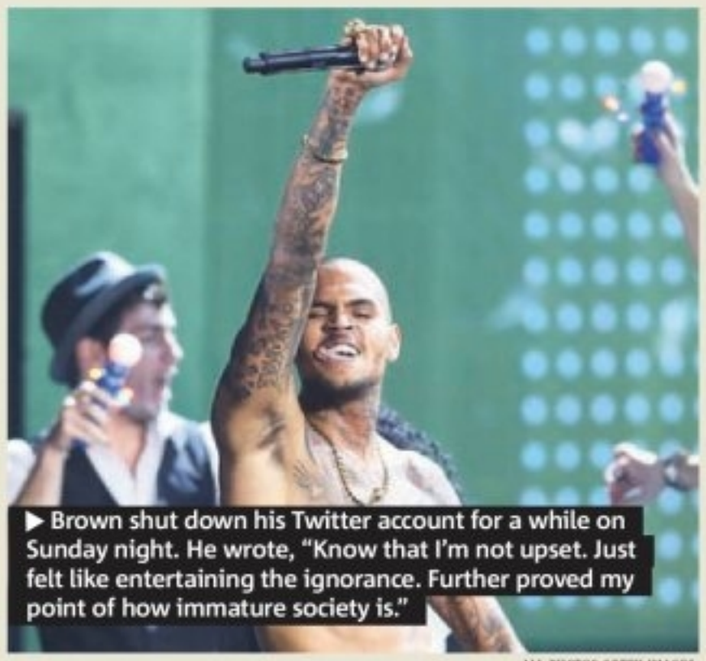
@AimeeMann
I get the feeling the phrase 'It is what it is' was said a lot in the editing room.

@PattonOswalt
Dear @lindsaylohan: I give you permission to Tweet me to smithereens when I do Lifetime's CHAZ BONO: THE CRUELEST CUT in March.

@MichaelLohan
You proved the critics wrong @LindsayLohan you are one of the best, so gifted, so amazing! Now apply it ALL! God bless you!

Brown takes a timeout after Twitter rant

The temper tantrum-prone singer **Chris Brown** took a break from his official Twitter account over the weekend after a lengthy and expletive-filled back-and-forth with comedian and writer **Jenny Johnson**. Toward the end of the row, Johnson made reference to Brown's 2009 arrest for assaulting girlfriend **Rihanna**, writing, "I have zero respect for a person who seems unapologetic for the terrible crime he committed and shows no signs of changing," to which Brown responded, "Just ask Rihanna if she mad" and then seemingly deleted his account. Brown has been spending time with Rihanna in Europe recently, which would lead one to believe that she is not, in fact, mad.



▶ Brown shut down his Twitter account for a while on Sunday night. He wrote, "Know that I'm not upset. Just felt like entertaining the ignorance. Further proved my point of how immature society is."

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Hair's the thing: Celebrating the best hairstyles of the past week

1: Is that hair or camouflage? **Queen Elizabeth II** met a sniper on Monday in Windsor, England.

2: A pink-haired **Nicki Minaj** attended her Pink Friday fragrance launch party at Macy's Queens Center last Tuesday in New York City.

3: Charlize Theron was snapped holding her son, **Jackson**, in Cape Town, South Africa, on Friday. Her head is shaved for her role in the new film "Mad Max 4: Fury Road."

4: Jenny McCarthy sported a bouffant at the 40th American Music Awards on Nov. 18 in Los Angeles.

5: Kate Winslet, wearing a jaunty fascinator, held her CBE (an award for services to drama). Her CBE was awarded by Queen Elizabeth II on Wednesday in London.

1: DAVID PARKER - WPA POOL/GETTY IMAGES
2: GARY GERSHOFF/WIREIMAGE
3: NASTIF MAHIE/FOTO24/GALLO IMAGES/GETTY IMAGES
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TV watch list

▶ Will partners Derek Hough and Shawn Johnson take home the disco ball trophy on "Dancing with the Stars: All-Stars"?

'Dancing with the Stars: All-Stars'

REALITY. The first all-gals finale also crowns the show's first all-star champ. Rest assured, these series landmarks don't diminish from the cheese factor when one lady waltzes away with the disco ball trophy tonight. **Season finale, 9 p.m., ABC**

'Parenthood'

DRAMA. Sarah and Mark disagree about parenting and relationship issues, which is good news for guest star Ray Romano's cranky photographer waiting in the wings. **10 p.m., NBC**

'Rizzoli & Isles'

DRAMA. "Rizzoli & Isles" returns from break, but there's no easing back into work for this pair when the ladies investigate the contamination source of a poisoning death. **Midseason premiere, 9 p.m., TNT**

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A long-awaited 'Dawn' breaks

Star Adrianne Palicki is thrilled to see her action film finally get released after three years of waiting

After three years of waiting, Adrianne Palicki is finally seeing her remake of 1984's "Red Dawn" — delayed by the same MGM bankruptcy issues that delayed "Skyfall" — hit theaters. It's a sign that things are looking up for the actress after the end of "Friday Night Lights" and the failed launch of a new "Wonder Woman" TV series. With "Red Dawn" and next year's "G.I. Joe: Retaliation," Palicki is definitely optimistic.

"Red Dawn" has had a number of release dates.

Thanksgivings for the last three years, yes. Pretty much.

Did any of your friends or family stop believing you that it actually existed?

You know what? I just stopped telling people I was in it. They were like, "When's that movie coming out?" and I'd be like, "I don't know what you're talking about. No idea. I never did that movie."

How is it to finally see it coming out?

Sometimes I pinch myself. And now seeing posters places I'm like, "OK! See?" Every time I'm reminded or my friend will call and she's like, "I saw it in front of 'Argo!'" I'm like, OK, it's happening. Because there were three years when it was going to happen and then it was not going to happen and then it was going to happen and then it was not going to happen. It's just nice. Thank God finally people can stop asking me when this movie's coming out.

What did you think about the decision to change the villains from Chinese to North Korean in postproduction?

China was a cool thing. It was ballsy. It's big, and it's kind of like that's possible, you know? But I understand why they felt they had to do it. I don't know, I think the biggest part of this movie that needs to be remembered is that it's not necessarily as much a political movie as it is a movie to go to and have fun and watch big explosions and car chases. Because it's very realistic. You know, six kids coming and taking back the country. Happens all the time. [Laughs] Whether you want to look at it as a political movie or not, there are a lot of parallels between what's been happening overseas and what's been happening in this movie, you know? People coming in and saying, "We're going to now change your entire government because ours is better and we know better than yours. So take that!" I mean, there's a devastation to it, too, for people who live this every day.

NED EHRBAR
METRO WORLD NEWS IN LOS ANGELES

"Sometimes I pinch myself. ... I'm like, OK, it's happening."
PALICKI, ON THE LONG-ANTICIPATED RELEASE OF "RED DAWN"

Adrianne Palicki

GETTY IMAGES

'Ninjas are cool!'

You're also in the new "G.I. Joe" movie playing Lady Jaye.

"She's a badass! Jinx was my favorite, I'll be honest with you. I used to play with her. I wanted to be a ninja. Ninjas are cool! They know how to use knives. I would cut myself in half, though. I'm somebody who shouldn't be a ninja."

Real-life survival skills

The young characters in "Red Dawn" face a daunting challenge when their suburban town is overrun by the North Korean military and they must take up arms to defend it. But how would the actors behind the characters fare in such a life-or-death situation? Palicki is confident that Hollywood has sufficiently prepared her for the worst. "Now, after all the training I've had for this movie and 'G.I. Joe' and 'Wonder Woman,' I feel like I could really hurt somebody. Or, you know, an amount of people," she says. "I think there's going to be a lot of people pissed off who trained me if I'm just in the corner going, 'Please don't hurt me!'"

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BY STEVE MUELLER
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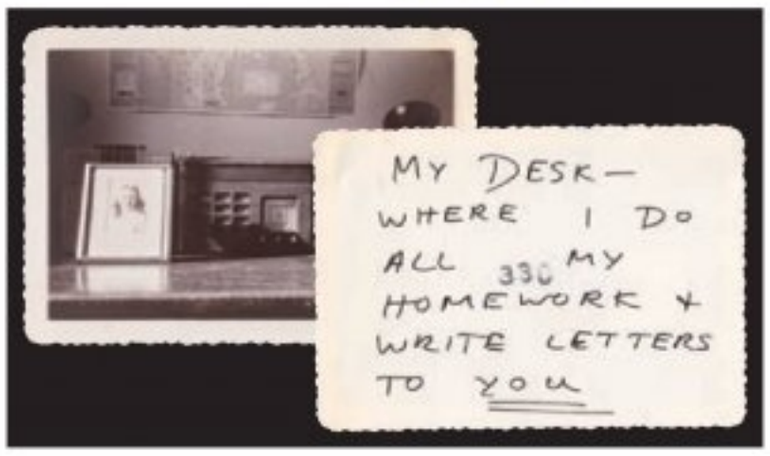

Pictures that

Ransom Riggs has always enjoyed collecting vintage photographs. This curious habit shaped his 2011 novel "Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children," which featured his writing melded with unusual found photographs, a reality — and a No. 1 best-seller.

"I would look around swap meets as I was collecting photos for 'Miss Peregrine's' which were mainly photos of odd-looking children from a long time ago," Riggs remembers. "But I also kept finding photos with writing on them."

Riggs says that a lot of the photos he stumbled upon just featured various dates or names. "Many were a big yawn fest," he recalls. "But every now and again, I'd find something so funny or confessional or revelatory that I'd stand back a little and feel like I'd been allowed a unique window into this otherwise lost world."

Those bewitching photos were the ones which made it into his new book, "'Talking Pictures: Images and Messages Rescued from the Past."

Riggs notes that it's your imagination that creates the book's narrative. "You start to imagine their story, what led to the creation of the photo. It's your imagination that is filling in the giant gaps of who these people were."

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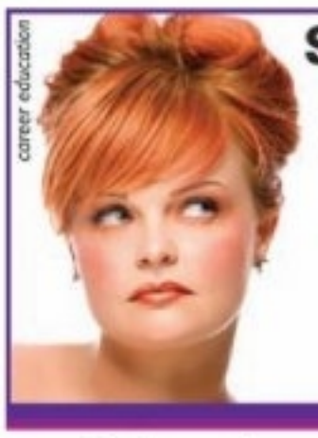

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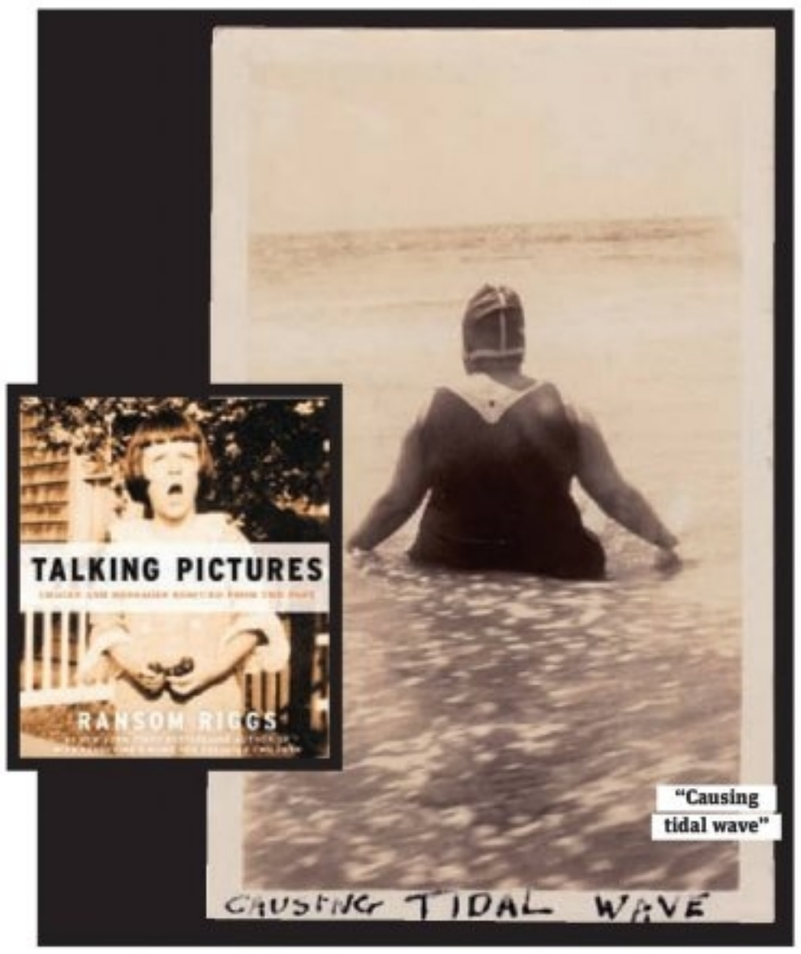

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myparenting

BRAND X PHOTOS

▶ Supplement companies claim that choline pills support "brain health."

Parenting in brief

Extra prenatal choline doesn't help kids' brains

Taking extra choline during pregnancy does not improve babies' language and memory skills, according to a new study.

"I think eating the recommended amount of choline, which is just about a half of a gram a day for pregnant women, would probably do you well," Dr. Steven Zeisel, the senior author of the study and a professor at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, told Reuters Health. "Going to high levels doesn't always give you improvement."

The results contrast with earlier studies in animals showing that a choline boost in utero improves rodents' performance on memory tasks.

Choline is an essential nutrient found in meat, eggs and milk — and during pregnancy and breastfeeding, large amounts of choline are delivered to the baby through the mother. Zeisel said it's possible that the women in the study who didn't take a choline pill were getting enough from their diet.

Earlier studies have found that pregnant women with very low levels of choline in their diet have a higher chance of delivering a baby with a birth defect. REUTERS

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Myanmar: Open for business

▶ Ngapali Beach, located along the beautiful Bay of Bengal, is the premier beach destination in Myanmar.

PAULA BRONSTEIN/GETTY IMAGES

Htay Aung, Myanmar's new minister for hotels and tourism, is busy trying to attract new airlines and hotels. "And our employees have to learn to speak English," he says.

Aung's position illustrates Myanmar's remarkable transformation from international pariah to budding Asian tiger. "We've become transparent, we believe in change," he says. And change they have: The country (which is also known as Burma) was ruled by military leaders until early 2011; for decades it was cut off from the rest of the world both politically and economically.

Myanmar's reforms have been handsomely rewarded: Barack Obama just visited the country last week, the first sitting U.S. president to do so. And with tourism a pillar of Southeast Asian economies, Aung plays a key role as Myanmar tries to attract not just political leaders but also the traveling masses.

"Myanmar is one of the world's hidden gems," he says. "The president [Thein Sein] is working to build relationships around the world, and democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi has traveled to express her ideas about the future development of the country."

Pagodas, ancient palaces, jungles and beaches rank among Myanmar's prime attractions — as does the fact that, because of its long political isolation, it hasn't been ruined by commerce and rampant development. Last year, 313,127 foreigners visited Myanmar, a 5 percent increase from 2010. That figure dwarfs compared to the more than 19 million visitors who chose neighboring Thailand last year. In a new development, Thais now often cross the border to Burma to buy Chinese counterfeits of Western brands.

"We also have weaknesses," acknowledges Aung. "Our infrastructure, including telecommunications, roads and airports, isn't very good."

But Myanmar has succeeded in bringing several international airlines to Myanmar and is vying for more investments. Aung proudly lists his countries many, notable assets:

"We're the largest country in Southeast Asia. We have historic edifices [and] hospitable people, and our country is safe."

Where to go

- **River Ayeyarwady:** You can travel in a traditional steamer.
- **Beach at the Bay of Bengal:** Myanmar's beaches are pristine and not overcrowded.
- **Yangon:** This is Myanmar's largest city and its commercial and cultural hub.

When to go

- **November through February:** You'll find nice weather and very little rain.

ELISABETH BRAW
METRO WORLD NEWS IN LONDON

By the numbers

313K

313,127 foreigners visited Myanmar in 2011, a 5 percent increase from 2010.

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Letters

letters@metro.us

The reason for the season isn't great online deals

The turkey was still warm and we are running off to the stores to buy more stuff. Many people were acting like sharks to a bucket of chum. Crazy!

Remember, Christmas is not about a new Xbox or iPad. It's about the celebration of the birth of our Lord.

I ask my fellow Christians to please pause during this beautiful holiday season. Take time to reflect and remember our neighbors and friends. A smile, a few cookies, a cake, something simple from the heart means a lot to people. We should be kind and considerate to each other all year, not just during the Christmas season.

JOHN MCLAUGHLIN, VIA E-MAIL

Why bother having another opinion? Assimilate!

I don't think what the Republican Party has to do to win is rocket science. They just have to become more like Democrats. Stop offering "GOODIES" to the rich and offer some goodies to the nonrich. Know why? There are more nonrich than rich and that means more votes. Deep, ain't it? Stop pandering to a declining white electorate and start realizing that America is multiethnic, and offer some goodies to women and minorities. If the GOP is too dumb to figure this out, then they are not smart enough to be president. The redneck, Confederate way of thinking that we still see in the South and in the Prairie states is fading, hopefully. The GOP has to move more to the center, probably become "pro-choice" and just basically become more like Democrats.

LARRY BLONG, VIA E-MAIL

Silver bells and silver linings

I am reminded of a Newhart episode where handyman George Utley told Dick Loudon about his neighbors' front porch being destroyed by a Nor'easter, describing it as the luckiest day in their lives. "How is that lucky, George?" He explained, "They were all sitting on the back porch at the time!" God bless my brothers and sisters suffering or in extreme discomfort at this time, but please keep in mind that only without your health do you have nothing. Happy holidays.

DAVID DIBELLO, VIA E-MAIL

Amid strife, a story of brotherhood

Despite all the bad news coming out of Middle East, there is one piece of good news: All of the Ethiopian Jews who wished to be in Israel have been rescued and brought to Israel. It has taken a long time and sometimes been difficult and dangerous and the good news is that a great job has been completed.

The Israeli pilots, who often flew large jet airliners into a dangerous warzone to land, pick up passengers and then take off from woefully inadequate airfields are great heroes in every sense of the word. What is interesting is that this airlift was the first time in the history of Africa where foreigners came into Africa to bring people out to freedom, safety and security instead of slavery in a distant land.

ARTHUR HORN, VIA E-MAIL

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Keep them as brief as possible, preferably under 100 words.
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Horoscope

♐ Sagittarius **Nov. 23-Dec. 21.** Because you continue to be in a rather promising cycle in terms of personal gain and success, your probabilities for adding to your resources are exceptionally good.

♑ Capricorn **Dec. 22-Jan. 19.** You're likely to do far better tweaking some of your own ideas than employing the schemes of others, which you would have to completely transform to render workable.

♒ Aquarius **Jan. 20-Feb. 19.** If you can, try to stay in control of things — but do so without calling any attention to your actions. You'll function astoundingly well being the power behind the throne.

♓ Pisces **Feb. 20-March 20.** A few friends who haven't been too cooperative or friendly lately could undergo a complete turnaround, unbeknownst to one another.

♈ Aries **March 21-April 19.** This could be a day of some outstanding achievements if you would simply follow the original course you set for yourself. Unfortunately, there's a high possibility that you'll get sidetracked.

♉ Taurus **April 20-May 20.** Someone in the past has given you some extremely valuable information that went right over your head. Today, for the first time, you might finally begin to appreciate its worth.

♊ Gemini **May 21-June 20.** A joint endeavor in which you're involved can be far more successful than you may realize if you're smart enough to follow it through.

♋ Cancer **June 21-July 22.** If you honestly believe your work performance is superior, this is a good day to talk to the powers that be about the possibility of getting some kind of compensation. Be assertive but truthful, and you can't fail.

♌ Leo **July 23-Aug. 22.** You're resourceful and practical, arousing much enthusiasm in your co-workers. It's a winning combination that others can't help but want to follow.

♍ Virgo **Aug. 23-Sept. 22.** Do not underestimate the many qualities that you have to offer. This is an excellent day to take a gamble on your talents and abilities, so don't hesitate.

♎ Libra **Sept. 23-Oct. 23.** It could be more important than usual for both you and your mate to be in accord on a critical issue. When harmony is allowed to prevail, successful results become more likely.

♏ Scorpio **Oct. 24-Nov. 22.** There's a good chance that circumstances could cause you to revise some of your methods and/or procedures. It might take a bit of courage on your part to do so. **BERNICE BEDE OSOL**

Across
1 Sudden silence
5 Victorian coiffure
9 Zoo attraction
14 Put — — in one's ear
15 Wield a hammer
16 Iroquois speakers
17 Like sherry
19 Practical joke
20 — kwon do
21 Benchmark
22 Action film highlight
23 Ambles along
25 Unser rival
26 Kind of student
27 Coveted sports car
30 "In case you — noticed . . ."
33 Makes up time
34 Gridiron meas.
36 Jai —
37 Watery
38 Cry out loudly
39 Jacuzzi feature
40 Do a double-take
41 Stengel of baseball
42 Custer's men
44 Itch
45 Exiled Roman poet
46 Accommodations
50 So far (2 wds.)
52 All-embracing
53 So-so mark
54 Where to go aground
55 Hubble, e.g.
57 Overcharge
58 By mouth
59 Miscellanies
60 Hunted and pecked
61 Abs are below them
62 Ski equipment

Down
1 Tool handles
2 Wolfpack member (hyph.)
3 More confident
4 Elev.
5 Develop
6 Duos
7 Carpe —!
8 Vintage
9 Gentle breezes
10 Misprints
11 Prejudice
12 Descartes
13 Seek information
18 Bay
22 Like a stale joke
24 All, in combos
25 Deke or juke
27 Elaborate
28 Deli breads
29 Run in neutral
30 Pilgrimage
31 A Baldwin
32 Computer input
33 Center's neighbor
35 Devious
37 Fixed the pilot
38 Masculine principle
40 Frayed
41 Yields territory
43 Globetrot
44 Tyrolean tunes
46 Purple shrub
47 Image, in combos
48 Sherpa's home
49 Overhead honkers
50 "Hello, matey!"
51 Tureen contents
52 Used to be
54 Noncom
55 It goes for a spin
56 Gown go-with

1	2	3	4	■	5	6	7	8	■	9	10	11	12	13
14				■	15				■	16				
17				18					■	19				
20			■	21				■	22					■
23			24				■	25				■	■	■
■	■	■	26			■	27					28	29	■
30	31	32			■	33					■	34		35
36				■	37					■	38			
39			■	40					■	41				
■	42		43					■	44			■	■	■
■	■	■	45				■	46				47	48	49
■	50	51				■	52				■	53		
54					■	55					56			
57					■	58				■	59			
60					■	61				■	62			

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3		1	5			7		
	4				5	2	1	
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	1	7	2				6	
		9			6	3		5
				1			8	4
	6			5	8			

SUDOKU **LEVEL: EASY**

5			1			6		
2			5		9		8	3
	7						5	
	5				1	9	6	
			4	2	5			
	2	1	6				3	
	9						4	
6	3		7		2			8
		2			8			6

SUDOKU **LEVEL: HARD**

Solution to yesterday's crossword

■	X	I	I	■	W	R	A	P	■	A	R	M	O	R
G	E	T	S	■	I	O	L	A	■	D	E	E	R	E
A	N	I	L	■	S	N	A	I	L	S	P	A	C	E
M	A	N	A	G	E	■	E	N	A	■	O	L	A	F
■	■	■	N	A	G	S	■	S	P	A	S	■	■	■
G	O	O	D	L	U	C	K	■	P	R	I	S	M	S
A	V	G	■	L	Y	R	E	S	■	A	N	T	A	E
F	E	L	T	■	S	A	V	E	R	■	G	I	R	L
F	R	E	O	N	■	M	I	N	U	S	■	N	I	E
S	T	R	O	B	E	■	N	O	B	L	E	G	A	S
■	■	■	L	A	R	A	■	R	A	I	D	■	■	■
R	O	C	K	■	A	I	D	■	I	D	I	O	C	Y
C	H	R	I	S	T	M	A	S	Y	■	B	L	U	E
M	I	T	T	S	■	E	L	I	A	■	L	E	D	A
P	O	S	S	E	■	D	E	B	T	■	E	O	S	■

How to play Sudoku: Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved. You solve the puzzle with reasoning and logic.

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GETTY IMAGES

▶ Holiday is leading the Sixers this season with 18.6 points per game.

Holiday looks to build on career game, calls for ball in crunch time

◗ Point guard pours in 33 points in win ◗ Developing into superstar ◗ Collins wants him to get to the line

As the Sixers anxiously — and painfully — await the debut of Andrew Bynum, another player has arrived. Jrue Holiday is turning into a superstar and filling the scoring void — which the Sixers desperately needed.

Holiday went off for a career-high 33 points (13-of-21) in Sunday's 104-101 win over Phoenix. He also dished out 13 assists (one shy of a career-high), while turning the ball over just twice. (Holiday is averaging 4.3 turnovers per game for the season.)

"I think Evan [Turner] and them kind of took the toll [Saturday night], so it was kind of my turn," Holiday said. "I like having the feel of the game. I guess I like the pressure of the game in my hands, especially games that come down to crunch time."

Up next

- **Tonight**: Mavericks at Sixers, 7 p.m. (CSN)
  Who to watch: O.J. Mayo (21.5 ppg)
- **Friday**: Sixers at Bobcats, 7 p.m. (CSN)
  Who to watch: Kemba Walker (18.0 ppg)

Holiday also is invaluable as a floor leader.

"He's our distributor and he's the one who makes the plays," Thaddeus Young said. "Sometimes the offense becomes stagnant without Jrue in the game."

But Holiday admits there are parts of his game that he needs to improve upon. Coach Doug Collins wants him to take that extra dribble and get to the free-throw line more. Holiday shot 6-of-8 from the charity stripe Sunday night.

"To get to the next level, I have to get to the free throw line more," Holiday said.

METRO

"They get me to and from where I gotta go at a fast pace."
– Richard

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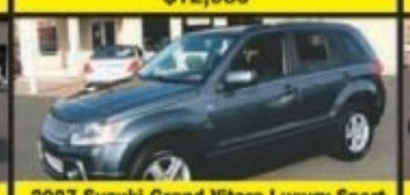

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Vick making progress, could practice this week

Mike Vick appears headed for a return Sunday night — if the Eagles want him under center.

The concussed quarterback has moved into phase four of his recovery and threw the football for the first time since being knocked out two weeks ago. Vick, who didn't play last night against Carolina, is symptom-free. If Vick can get to phase five, which includes real football activity, he might be able to return to practice.

"I'm encouraged at the way he's [going], but like I told you last week, that's not what I get paid to do," head trainer Rick Burkholder said. "If he plays, he plays, and if he doesn't, he doesn't. But he's going to be healthy before he plays."

Vick also has to be cleared by an independent neurologist, as well as Eagles concussion specialist Dr. Gary Dorshimer. While Burkholder sounded optimistic, he warned that it's a day-to-day situation.

"He's still got some criteria to meet. He's got to pass an ImPACT test," Burkholder said.

Nick Foles has started two straight games since Vick went down. With the season spiraling out of control, it might be wise to stick with the third-round rookie and see what he can do. But head coach Andy Reid has maintained that Vick, when 100 percent healthy, is his starting quarterback.

"Michael is the starting quarterback, and that's the way we work it until [he's healthy]," Reid said last week. "Until he gets healthy, then we can't do anything."

MIKE GREGER
mgreger@metro.us

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▶ Vick was knocked out with a concussion on Nov. 11 and still hasn't returned. Will he ever suit up again for the Birds?

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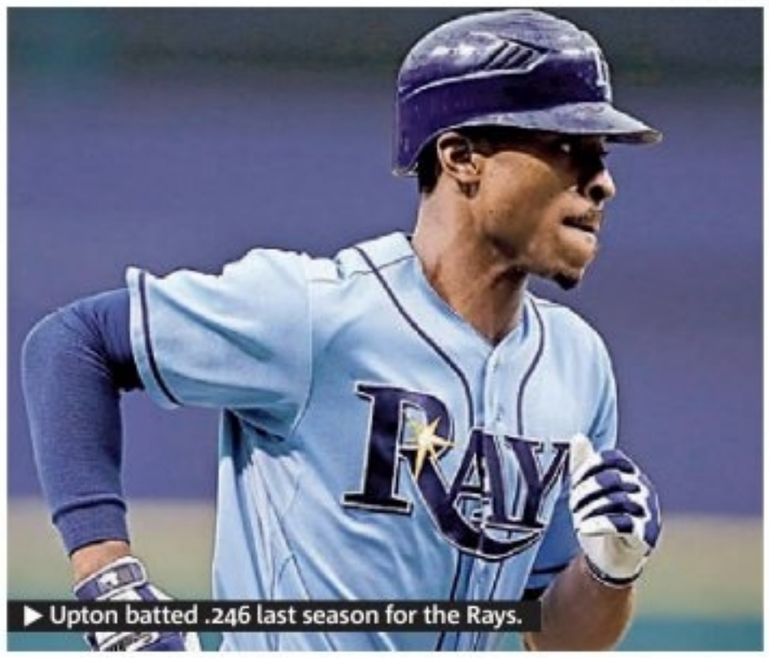

▶ Upton batted .246 last season for the Rays.

Phils looking to land free agent Upton in center

The Phillies are reportedly one of the finalists to land free agent B.J. Upton.

The center fielder visited Citizens Bank Park last week and the Phils hope to make a move before Christmas. The Atlanta Braves are also vying for Upton's services.

"I think that once Thanksgiving passes, as we get closer to Christmas, organizations want to put their teams on the field for their fans," Amaro told CSNPhilly.com. "Fans want to know who they're going to be cheering for and get excited about their clubs. We're no exception."

Amaro also listed Angel Pagan, Michael Bourn and Shane Victorino as other potential targets to fill the outfield void. Upton batted .246 with 28 home runs and 78 RBIs last season. It would likely take a five-year deal to get the 28-year-old Upton. METRO

NHL lockout handed over to mediator

With the NHL and its players' union still stuck in a labor dispute, the two sides are turning to a mediator. The first meeting with a federal mediator is scheduled for Wednesday, according to ESPN.

"While we have no particular level of expectation going into this process, we welcome a new approach in trying to reach a resolution of the ongoing labor dispute at the earliest possible date," NHL deputy commissioner Bill Daly said in a statement. "We have no further comment on the upcoming meetings at the current time."

The NHL tried unsuccessful mediation during the 2004-05 lockout. Yesterday marked the 72nd day of the stalled labor talks. Last Friday, the league canceled all games through Dec. 14, including NHL All-Star Weekend. METRO

GETTY IMAGES

▶ Will we see see Wayne Simmonds this year? It's still possible.

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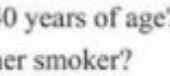

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GLASSES or CONTACT LENSES

with most of these insurances:

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Americhoice • F.O.P. • Aetna • March Vision Care
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EyeMed Vision Care · vsp Vision care for life · NVA · OptumHealth Vision · **Aetna Better Health**

* *Co-pays may apply*

* ***Davis Vision accepted only at Aramingo Ave location***

* ***Must Be Prescription Glasses or Sunglasses.***

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eye encounters

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